Western Nations Restriction on Indian Goods

*237. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's exports of marine, dye and dyestuff and leather are facing problems of environmental restrictions imposed by western nations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government in this direction to help the exporters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). The adoption of certain regulations by some of the western nations because of environmental and health and safety concerns have required the Government of India to take certain measures for preventing an adverse impact on exports of marine, dye and dyestuff and leather. The details in this regard are as follows :

Marine Products - In 1995 the European Union issued certain directives which underlined the need to improving the hygiene standards of processing plants in particular and other production related activities in general. The European Union insists that there be a total adherence to quality and hygiene standards right from the point the raw material is obtained till its final export. In this regard the exporters of marine products have been advised by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Export Inspection Council (EIC) of India to upgrade their facilities to match the required standards.

In the USA, consequent to a ruling of the US Court of International Trade delivered on 29.12.95, Section 619 of the US Public Law No. 101-162 which prescribes that shrimps harvested in the wild may not be imported into USA without the exporting country having been certified as a turtle safe country, shrimps sourced only from aquaculture units are being allowed into USA with effect from 1.5.96. In view of this the Government of India authorised Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) to countersign with effect from 1.5.96 a certificate (DSP-121) as prescribed by the US Government authenticated by the exporters concerned that a particular consignment of shrimps for exports to USA has been sourced from aquaculture. State Govts. have also been requested to cooperate in this behalf to safeguard sea turtles and the shrimp trade in their territorial waters. Separately the Government of India jointly with the Governments of Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand have already approached World Trade Organisation under the Dispute Settlement Mechanism for redressal of the unilateral ban imposed by the US Government.

Dye and Dye Stuffs - The German Government has banned the manufacture and use of AZO dyes based on 20 amines. The Government of India had constituted two Committees to discuss the implications of legislations evolved or likely to be evolved in the European countries banning certain dyes and chemicals. It was decided to identify alternative dyes for getting the list of substitute dyes/chemicals, their local availability and also the pricing structure of such substitutes, dyes/chemicals etc. However, India's exports to Germany in dyes and dye intermediates have not shown any downward trend. The exports on the whole in the sphere of dye and dye intermediates have shown a continuous increase from the year 1993-94 onwards.

Leather - The German Government issued an ordinance in July, 1994, effective from 1st April, 1996 banning the use of Benzidine based dyes and other similar substances in the manufacture of consumer goods, which come into regular contact with human body. The Netherlands Government also imposed a ban on Benzidine/ Azo dyes, effective from 1st August, 1996. Earlier on in 1989 the German Government had also banned the use of Pentachlorophenol (PCP) in leather and leather products, which was followed by Denmark, Sweden and USA. The German Government had further issued a Packing Ordinance in June 1991 on 'Avoidance of Packaging Waste" which aimed at avoiding packaging waste which did not, however, distinguish between the domestic and the foreign packaging waste. The Government of India in association with the Council for Leather Research Institute (CLRI) and Council for Leather Exports (CLE) helped the exporters of leather and leather products to comply with the environmental bearing regulations of countries, particularly Germany and European countries to facilitate exports freely.

Agreement with Russia

*238. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether any agreement has been signed between India and Russia during July 1996 regarding co-operation in the field of coal; and

(b) if so, the salient features of this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) The 3rd meeting of the Indo-Russian Working Group on coal was held in New Delhi on 11th and 12th July, 1996. Both sides discussed various issues of mutual interest in coal